



## News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &  
Thunder Basin National Grassland  
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

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### **Laramie Ranger District Plans Prescribed Burn on South Fork Mill Creek**

**(LARAMIE, Wyo.) October 6, 2011** – The Laramie Ranger District is planning a prescribed burn on the South Fork of Mill Creek at some point during the remainder of October or early November. The burn unit is approximately 115 acres and is located five miles northeast of Centennial, Wyo., along the eastern boundary of the Forest off the closed 397.A road.

The purpose of the prescribed burn on the Medicine Bow National Forest is to improve rangeland conditions for big-game winter habitat. The primary fuel in the burn unit is grass that has become decadent and unpalatable to grazing animals.

The exact date the burning will occur is dependent upon suitable weather and fuel moisture conditions. Burning will not take place unless daily smoke dispersal forecasts are good to excellent.

Hunters in elk area 10 and deer area 75 should be aware of the planned burn and should make their hunting plans accordingly. Signs will be placed on adjacent roads notifying the public of the prescribed fire, but no closures are expected. Ultimately the burn will benefit deer and elk herds in the area.

According to Aaron Swallow, Rangeland Management Specialist for the Laramie Ranger District, "The habitat value within the burn unit has been reduced through the years by over-mature grass creating thick layers of dead material, reducing the forage potential. The reduced forage quality in the area has resulted in fewer elk wintering on National Forest lands and increased the potential for conflict on private lands. We hope that this burn can go a ways toward reversing that trend."

Prescribed burns are used by the Forest Service to benefit wildlife and vegetation. A versatile management tool, the burns can reinvigorate rangeland, mimic historically natural fire disturbances, reduce hazardous fuels build-up and improve habitat for a variety of wildlife.

The South Fork Mill Creek burn will take place only if conditions are favorable. These conditions include fuel moisture, weather, smoke dispersal and staffing. Weather forecasts will be obtained from the National Weather Service and closely watched for changes in winds, temperature and humidity. Forest Service fire crews will continue to monitor the burn area until all fires are completely out.

Forest Service fire managers are trained to minimize the impacts from smoke to nearby areas during a prescribed fire. By aggressively ignited prescribed burns when the conditions are right, chances are lessened that the fire will generate hazardous amounts of smoke.

Smoke may be visible from Highway 130, I-80 and nearby communities of Centennial and Laramie, Wyo. The South Fork Mill Creek burn is partially funded by the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust.

Another prescribed fire is planned for the area in the spring of 2012, 110 acres on Bald Mountain.

For additional information on the prescribed burn, please contact the Laramie Ranger District office at 307-745-2300 or visit <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>.

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